

# **HARROW TOWN CENTRE FORUM**

**MONDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2012**

## **PRESENT:**

Jeff Jackson (Chairman)	St Ann's Shopping Centre
Councillor Sue Anderson (Vice-Chairman)	Harrow Council
Councillor Simon Williams (Vice-Chairman)	Harrow Council

## **BUSINESS MEMBERS**

Jonathan Betteridge	Debenhams Ltd
Howard Bluston	North West London Chamber of Commerce
Darren Harman	St George's Shopping Centre

## **COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Bernard Segal	Roxborough Residents' Association
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## **SERVICE MEMBERS**

Anthony Wood	Harrow Public Transport Users
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## **OFFICERS**

Mark Billington	Head of Economic Development and Research
Phil Greenwood	Head of Major Developments Projects
Dayo Ogunmuyiwa	Harrow Town Centre Officer
Andy Stubbs	Harrow Town Centre Manager

## **ALSO PRESENT**

Anthony Enright	Harrow Town Centre Police Team
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### **55. Apologies for Absence:**

Apologies were received from Councillor Ben Wealthy and Sergeant Richard Irlen.

**56. Minutes of Meetings:**

**AGREED:** That the minutes of the AGM and of the ordinary meeting held on 21 November 2011 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

**57. Matters Arising:**

**AGREED:** That it be noted that there were no matters arising.

**58. Outer London Fund:**

Outer London Fund – Round 1:

An officer provided an update on the various projects being conducted with funding from Round 1 of the Outer London Fund. Projects included:

- Banners of Faith – This had been a successful community project with the display of the banners, designed by local schools, in Station Road for approximately a month shortly after Christmas. Consideration would be given to repeating it another year, subject to funding, consultation with schools, and the banners being available from those schools that had collected them. It was further suggested that there be a display at Council premises;
- Light Garden –the project was completed and the lights removed at the end of December;
- Festive lights – these had been removed except for some lights remaining in trees;
- Animation – this would have a valentine theme and be projected from the St George's Centre from 9 February 2012. It had proved to be a technically challenging event but had the potential to raise Harrow's profile on a regional level. It was hoped to issue the press release on 10 February. It was suggested that the two Centre Managers be photographed in connection with the publicity;
- Events infrastructure – this was being installed late February/ early March;
- DVD – filming had been largely completed and the DVD was expected to be available from mid March;
- Community Radio – the 28 day broadcast had been completed on 31 December 2011 having completed 280 hours broadcasting, some of which had been outside broadcasts;
- Town Centre Website – Town Talk website support was under development and businesses would be approached to canvass support to populate the site with a proposed launch in March;
- Pop-up Shop – this had been delayed as landlords had sought a commercial lease. However, a property had now been identified, subject

to discussions, and if progressed, would include an art display by Nower Hill School pupils and employ staff to open and close the premises;

- Visual merchandising – this project had been planned for a minimum of 10 participants and had been successful in engaging with 16. A welcome evening had taken place, and a masterclass event and one to one coaching were planned;
- Harrow Into Work – the officers had notified GLA that this project would not be fully achieved as, despite 100 apprenticeships being planned, only 39 local work placements had been achieved. There had been a lack of take up of the opportunities by young people. It was agreed that presentations by retailers could aid recruitment and that this be progressed through discussions with a Young Enterprise representative and the college.

It was noted that the winning of the Round One funding had been publicised. Harrow Town Centre figures had risen in conjunction with a publicity article in December, together with the launch and publicity of the faith banners.

The Forum was informed of the arrangements for a food and dance festival that was planned for Saturday 17 March 2012. It would take place throughout the town centre and include a fashion show, a festival dance stage, a demonstration kitchen, local produce stalls and a continental market. Businesses had been offered the opportunity of restaurant extensions, for example onto the service road which would be enabled by a road closure. Members of the Forum would receive an invitation to the day including the finish at the Cumberland Hotel. The officers undertook to advise the Forum of the marketing plan when it was finalised.

The Chairman informed the Forum of a reptile fun farm, including snakes, which would be held at the shopping centre on 17 February 2012.

#### Outer London Fund – Round 2:

An officer provided the Forum with an update on the progress made with round two of the Outer London Fund bid. The Forum received a summary of the projects to be delivered, the expected impact and the outcomes. He advised that:

- Harrow Council had submitted a bid for £2 million and £1.75 had been offered. The acceptance of the funding was subject to Cabinet approval to the use of £300,000 from the capital programme as the Mayor for London was keen to ensure that Local Authorities provided match funding. The bulk of the funding would be received in the 2012-13 financial year;
- Design for London had indicated that it wanted a greater involvement in Round 2, particularly the Havelock Road / St Ann's public realm improvements and town park;
- the performance space and park may include an open air theatre, subject to design guidelines, and be a venue for music, dance and song;

- the Forum would play a key role in the development of a business for the Business Improvement District including ongoing events and markets.

In response to a question, it was noted that the connection between Havelock Place and College Road was beyond the scope of the bid and was a longer term aspiration.

The Forum thanked the Head of \Economic Development and Research and his staff for their significant achievement.

**AGREED:**

- (1) that the updates be noted;
- (2) the officers advise the Forum of the marketing plan for the food and dance festival when finalised.

**59. Updates:**

Major Developments update

An officer advised that streetscape works at the eastern end of St Ann's Road had not been able to commence in January as previously reported for two reasons: the Council had entered into a new highways contract with significant financial benefit, and awaiting the opportunity to co-ordinate several sources of money which would enable a more cohesive design. The Forum noted that:

- the Tesco application had been approved by the Planning Committee;
- the Lyon Road application had been submitted and the Mayor of London had commented on the quality of the architecture;
- there was nothing further to report on Dandara;
- the Neptune Point development was progressing;
- the Bradstowe House development was in the hands of the receiver and discussion was taking place regarding potential occupiers. It was noted that there were outstanding section 106 contributions.

Police update

A police officer presented the following update:

- the police had spoken to all banks and had undertaken a plain clothes operation due to a skimming problem with regard to ATM machines. CCTV evidence had been captured but it was necessary to catch them in the act;
- due to pickpocketing in certain stores, orders had been placed for signage to discourage shoppers from leaving handbags on pushchairs, clips with bells for purses, and bike marking;

- the visibility of the Town Centre police team definitely helped to reduce crime levels. A recent initiative was undertaken in Greenhill regarding use of mobile phones whilst driving;
- the use of the new town link radio system had been expanded. The Town Centre Manager indicated that he was awaiting details of the system and would make enquiries regarding face recognition software.

#### Marketing update

It was noted that, as the Interim Head of Communications was on leave, there was not a marketing update.

**AGREED:** That the updates be noted.

#### **60. Any Other Business:**

The Forum discussed the implications of the forthcoming opening of a retail Park at Wembley Stadium on the footfall at Harrow Town Centre. It was recognised that major initiatives needed to be undertaken at Harrow over the next 5 years, particularly with regard to parking and the accessibility of Harrow on the Hill station. An officer stated that the promotion of the Area Action Plan was aimed at looking at Harrow's role and how it could adjust to the more competitive environment.

A member of the Forum suggested a joint Party deputation to the Mayor of London concerning the accessibility of Harrow on the Hill station, subsequent to the Mayoral elections. A further member referred to a petition seeking disabled access which was due to be presented to the Mayor on 7 March. It was considered to be a distinct disadvantage that Harrow was a major railhead without disabled access and access was the most important factor for the long term viability of Harrow. It was noted that the officers were keen to work through the Transport for London property department as the area around the station had development value.

Darren Harman, St George's Shopping Centre Manager reported that:

- feasibility studies were being undertaken with regard to St Georges Shopping Centre and it was hoped to provide a further update at the next meeting;
- training was a priority;
- footfall has increased, some tenants had left but there had been some interest;
- in recognising that the internet was making inroads into the retail industry, retailers needed to ensure a good experience for those who wanted to shop.

The Chairman reported that footfall had increased during December, with the food court doing particularly well. The Arcadia group were interested and would have various outlets within the shop.

Jonathan Betteridge, Debenhams Manager reported that

- it was difficult to quantify the effect of the six month refurbishment programme;
- following a positive run into Christmas, it had become more challenging;
- the internet side of the business had grown to about 10% of the turnover. Debenhams had invested in technology to enable orders to be placed in store and be delivered to store, home or work;
- three or four new women's outlets would be opening together with a party store.

The officers would circulate the timeline over the 18 month process of the promotion of a Business Improvement District.

Harrow College would be arranging an apprenticeship week for potential learners and one for potential employers.

In response to question regarding the possible provision of a Section 106 Agreement with TfL to improve the bus station, it was noted that the Council's draft capital programme included a scheme in Kimberley Road which included the possibility of additional bus standing capacity.

It was reported that the Area Action Plan consultation was due to finish on 23 February, and feedback would be welcomed from the Forum. A summary of the key areas had been circulated together with details of roadshows and events. It was noted that although there were no evening events, several continued until 7.00 pm and there was a Saturday session.

In response to a question as to the status of the Forum business account, it was noted that it was non-trading, had no assets or liabilities and was separate to the Forum.

A Member of the Forum suggested the extension of the role of the Forum given the AAP as the plan covered the area along Station Road and to the Civic Centre.

Young Enterprise had a programme of activities and was seeking sponsorship for events.

In summary, the Chairman stated that there was a lot of positive feeling in Harrow. The officers undertook to circulate sponsorship opportunities arising from the visit by the Queen in March.

**AGREED:** That the comments be noted.

**The Meeting having started at 4.00 pm, finished at 6.00 pm.**